

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



DAVY OBJECTS TO GOING BACK TO SCHOOL WITH MR. DOZER.

## AN OLD SAILOR'S STORY.

CHAPTER VII.—A DISCOVERY.

"Now, Davy," said my newly-found old friend, "let's hear all about it."

"About what?"

"About what! Well, first of all about this here shindy. You've been fighting; what's that for?"

"He called me a smuggler, and said that my

father——" I could not bring out the rest; my heart was still swelling with a sense of the insult.

"Ay, ay; I twig," said the sailor; "and so you pitched into the big lubber. And for a little chap like you, I can't say but what you polished him off as he deserved: so that score's rubbed off. Well, and how came you here?"

I told him; that is to say, I began to tell him,

T T

PRICE ONE PENNY.

and had got so far as to what had happened after my father died.

"Your father *what*?" said Finn, opening his eyes.

"Died," said I, wiping mine with my sleeve.

"*Whew!* so they never told you——" Here he stopped short, and looked perplexed.

"Never told me what, Mr. Finn?" I demanded, starting up. A strange, terrible suspicion entered my mind then—a suspicion that my father had been captured in the cave, and that the knowledge of it had been kept from me.

"Avast, Davy! don't put a handle to my name," said the sailor; "call me Ned."

"I don't mind what I call you. I'll call you Ned if you like; but what was it they never told me?" I pleaded, passionately; "do tell me, Ned: father wasn't—wasn't"—I got out the dreaded word with a great effort at last, "*wasn't hung*, was he?"\*

Ned laughed heartily; and my heart beat lightly again. "Not he," said Finn, when his laugh had subsided; "but, bless your innocence! and so they told you the captain died in 'The Hide,' did they?"

"Yes, Ned; and *didn't* he?"

"Didn't he? Did he?" This was said so enigmatically that I was puzzled as well as excited.

"What do you mean, Ned?"

At this moment I was called away by my school-fellows, who were about to return; but I lingered behind long enough to hear whispered in my ear: "It was all a sham, Davy; your father got off; he didn't die; he is alive now."

"Where, where?"

"Ah, I don't know that I had ought to tell you that; and *this* is a secret, mind, what I have told you; but *your* mother knows all about it, Davy."

"Oh, tell me: do tell me all about it, Ned," said I, clinging to the sailor's arm, while the boys, now in the distance, were shouting to me to come on.

Finn looked perplexed. "I oughtn't to have blabbed," he said; "but as I have let part of it out——Do you know 'The Sloop,' Davy?"

"The public-house, Ned?"

"Ay; well, I shall be there after dark to-night; and if you can get your master's leave to come and see me, may-be I'll tell you something more."

Of course Ned said this to get rid of me; for it was not to be supposed that a schoolmaster would grant permission to a scholar to visit a public-house at night under any pretext. But I could not stay to hear more then.

Shall I tell what happened to me next? I think I had better pass over the next few hours in my history.

#### CHAPTER VIII.—LEAVING SCHOOL "FOR GOOD."

BETWEEN ten and eleven o'clock that night I was stealthily hurrying through the dark and silent streets towards a low and disreputable part of the

\* I should explain that my father was not in danger of capital punishment as a smuggler merely; but one of the preventive service men died of his wounds received in the conflict previously referred to, and this brought a charge of murder against every smuggler concerned in the affair.

town. My flesh was quivering and my bones aching, and my heart was beating fast with indignation, fear, and excitement. I met no one on my way, and I soon reached "The Sloop." The shutters of the house were closed; but a light gleamed through their crevices, and I took the precaution of peeping before venturing to open the door. There was only one man in the room; he was sitting by the fire with a tumbler on the table at his elbow. He was the man I wanted; and in another minute I was by his side.

"Ullo, Davy! so you ha' found me, eh? Did the skipper let you come?"

"No, he didn't," said I, interpreting "skipper" to mean schoolmaster; "but I am come, Ned."

"How did you manage that, youngster?"

"Got out of the bed-room window, Ned, and dropped down into the yard, and then got over a wall."

"But, I say, Davy, that's rather awk'ard; how do you mean to get back again?" asked Mr. Finn.

"I don't mean to get back again at all," I said; "and you must help me to get off clear, Ned." The smuggler stared at me.

"Look here, Ned," I went on, throwing off my jacket and stripping up my shirt sleeves; "do you see?"

He must have been blind if he had not seen; for my arms, and not my arms only, were covered with black and blue stripes, the marks left by my master's cane. Ned uttered an exclamation, and asked what all that meant.

"It means that I have run away from school for good," I replied; "it means that I have been caned like this for fighting, and Peter Gorman wasn't touched; and that Mr. Dozer—he's our school-master—took his part, and said that my father *was* an old smuggler, and that I deserved to have every bone in my skin broke, and—and"—my indignation overpowered me here.

"And so you have deserted, eh?" said the man, coolly.

"Yes, I have; and so would you have done, Ned."

"May-be; and you want me to help you off: is that it?"

Yes, that was it, and I said so.

"Well, put on your jacket, and we can talk about it," said Edward Finn; "and here, take a nip of this," and he pushed the glass towards me.

"No, I don't want that," said I, putting on my jacket and sitting down, taking care to place myself where I thought I could not be easily seen through the shutter cracks.

"Look here, Davy," said Finn, when all was snug, as he said; "you have done a silly thing, I take it; first to go fighting as I saw you to-day, and then to cut and run from school; but—well, I reckon I should have done the same."

"To be sure you would, Ned," I rejoined, eagerly. "I carried you on my back that night: do you remember it, Davy?"

Yes, I remembered it.

"And I reckon I could carry you now if that was all; you beant so mortal heavy; but where to? That's the next thing, Davy."

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"You told me my father is living, Ned," said I; "and I want to know where he is: then I should be able to tell you 'where to.'"

"No, no; that won't do, nayther," said the man; "I have been turning it over in my mind, Davy, all day, and I hadn't ought to have said what I did; and I shouldn't, only I was took by surprise like; but I can't blab any more; I mustn't. Your father's safe, and your mother knows it, and knows where he is: that's enough, isn't it?"

"It must be," I sighed; "but you are sure, Ned?"

"Sure and sartin of all I have told you, Davy. And now that's done with, what's next? I guess you'll be after going home to mother; and I can't help you much on that course, only if you want a little blunt"—and Ned put his hand in his pocket—"I've got a shot in the locker."

"I shan't go home," I answered; "and I don't want any money."

"Not go home?"

"No, Ned; don't you see? old Pigtail will be sure to follow me——"

"Stop a bit; who is old Pigtail?" demanded my friend.

"Why, the schoolmaster, to be sure: he wears a pigtail, you see."

"Oh; all right, Davy; well: old Pigtail would follow you, eh?"

"Yes, Ned; he did when I ran away, on horseback before——"

"You run away on horseback, Davy?"

"No, no, Ned; old Pigtail came after me on horseback, and caught me before I had got half way home; and then he brought me back, and didn't I catch it?"

"Toko, eh, Davy?"

"Yes, Ned, I suppose so: we don't call it by that name, though."

"Rup's eend, Davy?"

"No, not exactly; but as bad, or worse."

"Can't be wus, 'cept 'twas the cat," said Mr. Finn, sententiously.

"Well, that doesn't signify, does it, Ned? All I mean is, I can't go home, you see, for——"

"Very true, young gentleman, you cannot go home; there are very important reasons why you cannot ever think of going home just now." It was not Ned who said this. The voice came from behind the settle which stood on the opposite side of the fire-place, between us and the door; and the next moment, emerging from the darkness, Mr. Dozer came in sight. Naturally, I shrunk from him with terror, and, clinging close to Ned, I whispered in his ear, "Don't let him take me away."

The unexpected visitor smiled: I knew very well what that smile meant. Putting his hands behind him, he stood quietly looking me in the face.

"So, young gentleman, you walk in your sleep, I see. A bad habit that; don't you think so, my friend?"

"Uncommon," replied Mr. Finn, to whom the question was addressed.

"Don't let him take me away; you don't know what he'll do to me," I whispered once more in Ned's ear.

Ned did not appear to hear me, and I thought that ominous.

"Yes, an uncommonly bad habit," continued Mr. Dozer, still smiling. "Or, perhaps it was not sleep-walking after all, my young friend"—this to me. "Perhaps you did not remember that I walk round my premises every night, and go into every bedroom; and perhaps you did not think of shutting the window after you got out that way—don't you think that was it, my little fugitive?"

I did not answer the mild interrogation; and the gentleman went on:—

"And you thought no one saw you on your ramble; and that there was not any little bird of the air to tell the matter; and you fancied that 'old Pigtail' would never find you in this elegant retreat? Come, come: we are not quite blind, you see: not always dozing, though we are a Dozer."

I knew what this meant. I had reason to know this formula, which I had heard often enough, but never without being soon followed by shrieks and loud lamentations on the other part. It was a playful way this gentleman had of blending irony with punishment.

"And now, my friend"—this to Ned Finn—"I will relieve you of your somewhat unexpected and troublesome charge. We won't ask you to carry him on your back this time"—so he had heard the greater part of our conference: he must have followed me pretty closely—"not this time; it would be a convenience, to be sure, under certain circumstances; but we will dispense with that. Now, my dear young friend, we will not intrude on the privacy of your friend any longer." Saying this, Mr. Dozer advanced and laid his hand on my arm, while I endeavoured to evade his gripe, and clung closer and closer to Ned.

Until now, Mr. Finn had listened apparently with indifference to Mr. Dozer's harangue, only that I fancied I could detect, when I looked up to him, a play about the corners of his mouth, though what it meant I could not have decided if I had been sufficiently composed to try. But directly Mr. Dozer's hand touched me, a stronger hand than his was laid upon his collar, and held him at arm's length, and a quiet but determined "Avast!" reached his ear and mine.

Mr. Dozer slightly changed countenance. "My friend, do you know what you are doing?" he asked, a little tremulously, as he endeavoured, though vainly, to free himself from Ned's hold.

"Look here," said Mr. Finn, tightening his grasp; "you have spun your yarn, and now I have got to spin mine. Turn and turn about is fair play, all the world over. You want this here boy: well and good; and if I hadn't seen what I have seen, I dunno but what I'd have persuaded him to go back with you; for, look you, I don't hold with deserting: stick to your colours when you've chose 'em: that's my way."

"I didn't choose, Ned," I sobbed; "I was run away with to school——"

"Vast, Davy, vast," said Ned, laying his disengaged hand on me: "let me say my say. But seeing what I have seen, and guessing what's to

come if you have your will, governor, and having knowed this here young bird from the egg, as you may say, and having some regard for him as well, and thinking as how he's had larruping enough for one while—what I say is, no force. If Davy likes to go along with you, well and good; and if he likes to come along with me, well and good too. There, now, Davy boy, is it to be the skipper or Ned Finn?"

"I'll go with you, Ned," I cried out.

"But, my friend," gasped Mr. Dozer.

"Stop a bit; I may as well make mention of all the ins and outs of the case," interposed Mr. Finn. "In case Davy goes along with you, I suppose he can give a guess at what's to follow."

"I'll go with you, Ned," I reiterated earnestly.

"In case he comes with me, in two hours we'll be out to sea, and alongside the 'Sally.' You've heerd of the 'Sally' afore now, Davy, my boy! and then he'll share what luck happens, good or bad."

"I'll go with you, Ned," said I again, my heart bounding at the thought of my treading the deck of the cutter my father once commanded, and with the wild hope of meeting him there.

"Wait a bit, Davy: aboard the 'Sally' you'll be under orders, and you'll have to obey 'em. No getting out of winders, and tumbling over walls there: no back door, Davy. And now, Davy—choose."

"I'll go with you, Ned."

"You hear that," said Ned, releasing Mr. Dozer; "and now my proposal is to part friends. It's all handy: there's the kittle on the fire; here's the sugar; and here—" pulling out of his pocket the flask with which my lips had been slightly acquainted earlier in the day, and which had certainly been replenished since then, "here's the real stuff: what d'ye say to shaking hands over it, and parting peaceable?"

"This is most extraordinary conduct," said Mr. Dozer, adjusting his rumped collar. "Do you know, my friend, that what you are doing is illegal—against all law?"

"Very likely, governor," said Ned, coolly; "the law and I has shook hands and parted long ago—wus luck."

"Against all law," repeated my schoolmaster; "and that if I were to raise the house—raise the house, sir—"

"You had better not try it on, old chap," said Mr. Finn; "the old 'Sloop' is gone to sleep, and left me in charge—better not wake her."

Mr. Dozer seemed to think so too; for he remained silent for a minute or two, and then he moved towards the door. But he was intercepted.

"Can't hardly allow that, sir," said the sailor; "you wasn't axed here; but being here, you see, we can't part with you till our pleasant meeting breaks up."

"You don't mean that you will prevent my going out of this house if I please to go," said Mr. Dozer.

"That's 'xactly the ticket," said the other coolly, "it might be ill-convenient, you see."

The schoolmaster made a dash at the door; but he was no match for the smuggler, who, without

much violence, almost lifted him in his arms and seated him on the settle.

The two hours passed away, and as the clock struck one, Ned started to his feet.

"Now, Davy, and now old boy, we'll let you out of limbo."

Mr. Dozer rose silently; he had been silent ever since he had found himself so completely in Ned's power; it was the silence of terror and abject submission.

"You are not going to—to—"

"No, no, governor; you shall go aboard your own ship, without you'd like a trip across the water," said Mr. Finn, good-humouredly.

"Not on any account," said the schoolmaster, hastily.

We were soon out in the street. It was still dark, though the moon was just rising. As we passed by a turning, I heard a sound close by me, which I remembered to have heard on one other dark night in my history—a sound like the cooing of a dove. Mr. Dozer started.

"All right," said the smuggler, as we were almost immediately afterwards joined by two other men, though, where they sprang from, it would have been hard to guess; "and now, brother, you may port your helm."

Mr. Dozer seemed to understand that this was a permission for him to return homeward, for he did not require a second hint. The next minute he was running off in full speed, and I never afterwards saw him.

A few minutes later, and, with my companions, I was in an open boat, on the channel I have described; in half an hour I was on the sea, having left school "for good."

#### CHAPTER IX.—ON BOARD THE "SALLY."

I HAVE no valid excuse to offer for the way in which I escaped from the thralldom of Mr. Dozer's school: I may say, in palliation, perhaps, that I really had been cruelly punished, and that with a degree of partiality towards my antagonist in the fight, which made my punishment doubly galling. But admitting this, and also that the teacher was a sad tyrant, and the school itself a continual scene of disorder and confusion—such as it is hoped would be looked for in vain in the present day—I was wrong in deserting, even as Ned Finn half acknowledged.

But in truth, I was ill taught; my perceptions of right and wrong were obscure and confused; the moral atmosphere in which I had breathed, even from childhood, was tainted with lawlessness, and I had no particular compunction after wrong-doings, because it was wrong. The annoyance was, when wrong-doing failed in its design.

I had no compunction now, while I lay in the stern sheets of the boat, wrapped up and covered over with a rough coat or two, belonging to the men who were rowing silently over the waves. I thought of the wrongs I had received, some fancied and some real; I remembered how I had been smuggled into school, two years before; and though the offence had been condoned, I argued that there was no harm in smuggling myself out of it. But more than all, my mind dwelt upon the discovery

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I had that day made, (if Ned were to be believed, and of this I had no doubt,) of my father's existence when I had so long thought him dead, and on the hope that perhaps I might presently see him as the captain of his old cutter. And after all, I think that the intelligence I had received was in a great measure the cause of my flight.

I cannot tell how long I lay thinking of these things, as the boat rose and fell with every wave over which it passed, but I know that my thoughts began to wander, until at last I sank into a deep sleep.

On waking the scene was changed. I found myself lying in a small crib, or berth, in a very small cabin, into which daylight was streaming through an open hatch, while over my head I heard the tramping of feet and straining and rattling of ropes and blocks. I felt also the pitching and tossing of a vessel at sea; but the only effect this had upon me then was to hurry me to my feet, and drive me up a narrow ladder (none of my garments having been removed) on to the deck above.

I was on board the "Sally," I knew that, and the trim little cutter was careering through the water, under a full spread of canvass set to catch a brisk morning breeze. It was the first time I had been at sea; but I had heard a good deal about it, and new sensations of pleasure seemed to spring up within me as I looked over the bulwarks and saw the blue water all around, and felt the boards beneath me rising and falling with every coming wave.

Several sailors were on the deck, or busy in the rigging, but, excepting two, all were strangers. The two whom I recognised were Edward Finn, who was now at the helm, and another of my old acquaintances, Tom Davis. My father was not there.

Davis came up and shook hands with me. "So you've turned sailor, eh, youngster?"

"I should like to be one," I said.

"Yes, Ned has told me all about it; and he wants me to take you on trial. We'll see."

"Are you captain, sir?" I asked.

"For want of a better," said Davis, walking away.

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They treated me kindly, those rough sailors—lawless men though they were. Perhaps this was partly because they remembered my father. They often talked of him, but always as of one who was dead. This puzzled me; but I did not dare to ask any questions, for I remembered Ned's injunctions to secrecy, and I had not much opportunity, for several days, of getting many words with him apart from the crew.

I found that there was order and discipline, such as I should scarcely have expected, on board the smuggling cutter. Tom Davis was master, or captain, and he made himself obeyed. Ned Finn was mate; all the rest were stout able-bodied seamen, and two or three of the number were deserters from the royal navy.

A few days after my being taken on board, the "Sally" was sailing up the Meuse, and was finally brought to anchor at the port of Rotterdam. And at Rotterdam I was taken on shore by Ned Finn,

who seemed to have naturally slipped into the position of my guardian, and I was, as far as outward equipments could go, turned into a sailor.

### THE SPIDER FAMILY.

THIS family is a very singular and interesting one, in spite of the ugly appearance of some of its members, and of the general dislike which is inspired by them. I do not wish to insinuate that the habits and manners of spiders are altogether such as are pleasant and amiable, or even proper or moral; yet I do think that they ought not to be viewed with such loathing and abhorrence as they too frequently are; they have been created for good and beneficent purposes, and their organization, habits, and instincts were given them by One of infinite wisdom and divine prescience. To a well-ordered mind, the "meanest things" that exist furnish matter for profitable contemplation. Such an observant spirit

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Profitable lessons may be learned by an observation of the curious ways and contrivances of spiders. Tradition informs us, for instance, that one taught Robert Bruce perseverance, and inspired him with hope when well-nigh conquered by sickness and disaster. Confined to his bed at Inverary, after his seventh defeat by the English, Bruce marked the spider, foiled in seven attempts to reach the ceiling of the room, succeed on the eighth. "Why may not I," said the Scottish monarch, "do likewise?" He rose from his couch of sickness, resolved to make the eighth attempt, and succeeded.

A careful investigation of the habits, in different states of the weather, of one of these insects which shared his "dungeon gloom," is said to have afforded Dumourier the hints for the plan of operations by which he invaded and subdued Holland, in 1797. Another problematical service to the human race, although undoubtedly a service to the individual most concerned, was that rendered, according to Popish miraculists, to St. Felix of Nola. Being pursued by enemies who thirsted for his life, he fled to some ruins. He sought safety by creeping through a hole in a wall. This hole spiders covered over with their webs, before the pagans got up to it; and there, adds the legend, the saint lay for six months, miraculously supported.

Spiders are often the allies of man, by keeping other insects within due limits. For instance, we sometimes have to choose between spiders and flies; and Betty's broom occasionally proves an enemy instead of a friend. Their webs, also, have been converted into useful articles of dress: they have been made to envelope the shapely leg as a silk stocking. This has been done by an ingenious Frenchman, M. Bon, of Languedoc, who ascertained that three ounces of spider's silk would make a pair of stockings for legs that required between seven and eight ounces of that of the silkworm to encase them. Such stockings, however, it must be confessed, are never likely to become common. The little spinners are too ferocious to form peaceable communities; besides, it was computed that it took

twelve spiders to produce as much silk as a single silkworm, so that one pound of the material would require the united labour of more than twenty-seven thousand of these spinners. Then, again, it is not the common web woven by any kind of spider which can be so manufactured, but one of peculiar strength and thickness, which the female of a short-legged garden species spins into a covering for her eggs.

This is not all that has been done by spiders for the benefit of mankind: their web has served to determine the distance of the heavenly bodies; and by it the movements of what were till lately considered as fixed stars, have been ascertained; for accuracy of observation has been greatly promoted by the use of the exquisitely fine fibres of which the web is composed. Measuring to a hair's-breadth will not do for the astronomer: his admeasurements must go to the breadth of a spider's thread, through a network of which he looks at the starry heavens.

Cobweb, in the olden times, used to be applied to cut fingers as a styptic, as Bottom the weaver, in "Midsummer Night's Dream," tells us: "I shall desire of you more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb. If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you." A recent French chemist has asserted that it possesses an anodyne quality, and might be rendered available as an internal remedy for diseases. This reminds me of a passage in Burton's curious medley of learning and superstition, "The Anatomy of Melancholy," wherein he states that, "being in the country in the vacation time, not many years since, at Lindly, in Leicestershire, my father's house, I first observed the amulet of a spider in a nut-shell lapped in silk, etc., applied for an ague by my mother, Mistress Dorothy Burton, whom, although I knew to have excellent skill in chirurgery, sore eyes, aches, etc., and such experimental medicines, as all the country where she dwelt can witness to have done many famous and good cures upon divers poor folks, that were otherwise destitute of help; yet, among all other experiments, this one I thought was most absurd and ridiculous: I could see no warrant for it. At length, rambling among authors (as often I do) I found this very medicine in Dioscorides, approved by Matthiolus, and repeated by Aldrovandus."

Our poetical observers of nature have not neglected this insect. Young says:—

"The spider's most attenuated thread  
Is cord, is cable to man's tender tie  
Of earthly bliss; it breaks at every breeze."

Shakespeare writes:—

"A hair may bestride the gossamer  
That idles in the wanton summer air,  
And yet not fall—so light is vanity."

In his play of "King John," he alludes to the extreme fragility of this delicate piece of nature's workmanship. "If," says Falconbridge to Hubert, speaking of the death of Arthur:—

"If thou didst but consent  
To this most cruel act, do but despair,  
And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread  
That ever spider twisted from her womb  
Will serve to strangle thee."

Clare has the following passage:—

"How fine the spider's web is spun,  
Unnoted all of vulgar eyes,  
Its silk thread glittering in the sun,  
Art's bungling vanity defies."

Various are the purposes for which an all-wise Providence has bestowed on spiders the power of spinning silk from their bodies. By this they can construct for themselves a place of concealment from their enemies, a sheltering canopy from rains and storms; nets, snares, and cells, where, "hushed in grim repose," they "expect their insect prey;" and a protective covering for their eggs. The thread is, originally, a glutinous secretion drawn out from certain reservoirs on the body of the insect. If a spider be examined minutely, there will be perceived four or six little teat-like protuberances, or spinnerets, surrounded by a circle; these are the machinery which, by a process more singular than that of rope-spinning, the thread is drawn. Each spinneret is studded with regular rows of minute bristle-like points. These points are so exquisitely fine, that a space often not much bigger than the sharp end of a pin is furnished, according to Reaumur, with a thousand of them. From each of these tubes proceeds a thread astonishingly slender, which, immediately after issuing from it, unites with all the other threads into one; hence, from each spinneret proceeds a compound thread, and these threads, at the distance of about one-tenth of an inch from the apex of the spinnerets, again unite, and form the thread we are accustomed to see, which the spider uses in forming the web. Leeuwenhoeck, in one of his extraordinary microscopical observations on a young spider not bigger than a grain of sand, in enumerating the threadlets in one of the threads, calculated that it would require four millions of them to be as thick as a hair of his beard. Of such delicate cordage is the web constructed! But how is this net-work interwoven? What are the instruments required for the elaborate work? The spider uses only the claws of its feet, nature's instruments. With these the creature guides and arranges the glutinous threads as they are drawn from the spinnerets. In some species of spider, two of the claws are furnished underneath with teeth, like a comb, by means of which the threads are duly separated and disposed. When the spider has to ascend by the line which has enabled it to drop from an elevation upon the ground beneath, it winds up the line as it proceeds into a little ball. In this manoeuvre, a third claw between the other two is provided.

A singular sight belonging to the autumn, is the occasional showers of *gossamer* that fall from the upper regions of the air, and cover everything as with a veil of woven silver. You may see them descending through the sunshine, and glittering and flickering in it, like rays of another kind of light. Or, if you are in time to observe them before the sun has dried the dew from off them in the early morning, they look like robes of fairy tissue-work, gemmed with innumerable jewels. This beautiful sight has thus been accounted for. "An immense swarm of small spiders take advantage of the moisture of the air, to carry on their operations, in which they are so industrious that all the stubble-fields and hedge-rows are soon covered with the fruit of their labours, in the form of a fine net-work. They appear exceedingly active in the pursuit of the small insects, which the cold of the night now brings down, and commence this fishery about the

time that the swallows give it up and quit our shores. Their manner of locomotion is curious: half-volant, half-aëronaut, the little creature darts from the organs adapted to that end, a number of fine threads, which float in the air. Mounted thus in the breeze, he glides off with a quick motion of the legs, which seem to serve the purpose of wings, for moving in any particular direction."

The Reverend Gilbert White, of Selborne, in a letter to Daines Barrington, writes thus on this interesting subject:—"On September the 21st, 1761, I rose then on a visit, and intent on field-diversions, I rose before day-break. When I came into the inclosures, I found the stubble and clover grounds matted all over with a thick coat of cobweb, in the meshes of which a copious and heavy dew hung so plentifully, that the whole face of the country seemed, as it were, covered with two or three setting-nets drawn one over another. When the dogs attempted to hunt, their eyes were so blinded and hood-winked that they could not proceed, but were obliged to lie down and scrape the incumbances from their faces with their fore-feet; so that, finding my sport interrupted, I returned home musing in my mind on the oddness of the occurrence. As the morning advanced, the sun became bright and warm, and the day turned out one of those most lovely ones, which no season but the autumn produces—cloudless, calm, and serene. About nine, an appearance very unusual began to demand our attention—a shower of cobwebs falling from very elevated regions, and continuing, without any interruption, till the close of the day. These webs were not single filmy threads, floating in the air in all directions, but perfect flakes or rags, some near an inch broad, and five or six long, which fell with a degree of velocity that showed they were considerably heavier than the atmosphere. On every side, as the observer turned his eyes, might he behold a continual succession of fresh flakes falling into his sight, and twinkling like stars as they turned their sides towards the sun. How far this wonderful shower extended would be difficult to say; but we know that it reached Bradley, Selborne, and Arlesford, three places which lie in a sort of triangle, the shortest of whose sides is about *eight miles* in extent. Neither before nor after was any such fall observed, but on this day the flakes hung on the trees and hedges so thick, that a diligent person sent out might have gathered baskets full."

The "Liverpool Mercury," of 1826, narrates a similar phenomenon as occurring in the neighbourhood of that town, and for many miles distant, on Sunday, the 1st of October. Countless myriads of spiders are necessary to produce this abundance of gossamer; for, according to Buffon, it would take nearly seven hundred thousand animals to produce a single pound of thread.

Sometimes these creatures and their chariots are wafted very considerable distances. "One day," says Mr. Darwin, in his "Journal" attached to the "Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of H.M.S. Adventure and Beagle," "the weather having been fine and clear, the air was full of patches of the flocculent gossamer-web. The ship was quite sixty leagues distant from the land, in the direction of a

steady though light breeze. Vast numbers of a small spider, about one-tenth of an inch in length, and of a dusky red colour, were attached to the webs. The little spider, when first coming in contact with the rigging, was always seated on a single thread, and not on the flocculent mass. This latter seemed merely to be produced by the entanglement of the single threads. The spiders were all of one species, but of both sexes, together with young ones. The little aëronaut, as soon as it arrived on board, was very active running above, sometimes letting itself fall, and then reascending the same thread; sometimes employing itself in making a small and very irregular mesh between the ropes. It could run with facility on the surface of the water. Its stock of web appeared inexhaustible. While watching some of these tiny creatures that were suspended by a single thread, I several times observed that the slightest breath of air bore them away out of sight in a horizontal line, with a rapidity that was quite unaccountable."

[To be continued.]

#### LORD PALMERSTON AT HOME.

PERFECTLY at home is the premier on a grand field night in the senate, when the Opposition benches are thronged with eager and hopeful antagonists, exulting in having a good case, as they conceive, to make out against him, and the debate waxes fast and furious. There he sits, noting everything but disturbed by nothing, whether the policy of the government is the object of attack, or himself specially, for some particular act for which he is immediately responsible. Then he rises to confront the hostile phalanx, with an air of inimitable serenity, as if about to remark upon the state of the weather, and delivers a great speech, in which, with admirable dexterity, he defends his deeds, returning an arrow as sharp as the one sent, when he likes, or causing a sarcasm to rebound with telling effect upon its unfortunate utterer, or facetiously tripping up an adversary by the heels, and even reconciling the unlucky wight to his fate by the jocularity of his manner, while both sides amazingly enjoy the fun. "We are all proud of him," said Sir Robert Peel, while about to vote against him, alluding to his character and talents, on an occasion remarkable as the last time that the lamented statesman addressed the House.

Quite at home also is the prime minister at Cambridge House, Piccadilly, his town residence, when giving audience to a body of his political supporters, dissatisfied with the conduct of the cabinet as laggard on behalf of the public interests, or at variance with it on some affair of home or foreign policy. Very patiently are their representations listened to; very courteously is promise made that the matter shall be brought before his colleagues; and not at all disconcerted is he when some dodger has gained admission to his privacy, like Father Daly, and immediately begins poking him with threats of "action" on the part of malcontent M.P.s, unless the course suggested by the embassy is adopted. If he ever yields a point, it is to convincing suasion, not to audacious threaten-

ing, reminding us of the motto of his family arms, *Flecti, non frangi*, "To be bent, not broken."

To neither of the places mentioned will reference again be made, for party politics are not within our province, but to Broadlands, the country seat of the viscount, the park of which immediately joins the small market-town of Romsey, in South Hants. The town lies on the old high road from London to Poole, ten miles south-west of Winchester, eight miles north by west of Southampton, and is now passed by a branch railway running from a station on the South-Western line to Salisbury. It stands on the left bank of the Test, a capital trout stream, which flows wide and clear through the adjacent park. Its woollen manufactures and paper mills were once of importance, but they have now vanished, and the place exclusively depends on the rich agricultural country around it. A son of one of its clothiers founded the fortunes of the House of Lansdowne. Corn-fields, pasture-lands, and fine woods, meet the eye in every direction in the neighbourhood. St. Mary's Church, formerly the minster of an abbey of Benedictine nuns, renders the common-place country town an object of interest and regard, to which its close connection with the accomplished veteran statesman adds not a little—a man, perhaps, who is master of more diplomatic and court secrets than any other now living.

Broad were the lands which formed the patrimony of many a so-called religious house in the days of old; away for many a mile stretched the fair, fat acres; and Broadlands, with adjoining properties, originally appertained to St. Mary's Abbey, Romsey. The sisters have disappeared, and their cloisters likewise.

"And when he came to St. Mary's aisle,  
Where nuns were wont to pray,  
The vespers were sung, the shrine was gone,  
And the nuns had passed away."

But their estate remains, now in the possession of England's premier and other proprietors; and the grand old church stands, now more usefully occupied than in their time, not long ago restored during the incumbency of the Hon. and Rev. Gerard Noel. Many ladies of the royal line were connected with

the abbey as novices, nuns, and superiors. Here Matilda, wife of Henry I, the "good Queen Maud," was educated. Here was poor Mary, daughter of King Stephen, who, after becoming abbess, accepted the Count of Boulogne for a husband, but was compelled ultimately, by the thunders of the church, to leave him, with her two children, and died broken-hearted at Montreuil. Some later abbesses and sisters, as legend says, proved unworthy, and had to be rebuked by a supernatural vision for their worldliness. Of others, the veritable record is, that the Bishops of Winchester had to censure them for "immoderate habits of intemperance;" and one was poisoned in her cups.

The church is a perfect specimen of Norman construction, simple, massive, and very lofty, with zigzags in bold relief for the principal interior ornaments. There are portions of later styles, suggestive of the development of art which actually occurred at Salisbury and Winchester. As the minster of a nunnery confined to the service of women recluses, it has no western door; and the level of the aisles is slightly raised above the level of the nave, which was occupied by the nuns' stalls. Formerly there was a singular object on the top of the tower, an apple tree of large girth and extreme age, which grew upon a small portion of mould there. It blossomed and ripened its fruit every year, in the same perfection as if planted in an orchard, bearing red-shanked and golden pippins, which sold rather higher than the usual market price, owing to the peculiarity of the site.

After the eighth Harry had pounced upon the patrimonies of monks and nuns, Broadlands came into the possession of the St. Barbe family, who held the estate for two centuries. John St. Barbe represented the county of Hants in 1654, and lies buried in Romsey Church, along with his wife Grissell, out of whose names the anagram was constructed,

{ John } St. Barbe.  
{ Grissell }  
Be in shares in blest glory.

Their busts appear upon a monument, with the effigies at full length of their four sons, and the fantastically arranged lines, which are to be read in the order of the numerals.

"Earth's rich in mines of precious dust,  
"whom nature, wedlock, grace, did tie  
"and faithful ones,  
"in one fast chain of vanity;  
"Since in her bowels rest these just  
"whose silent bones  
"because such righteous and their seed,  
"Dead here do rest, yet left not earth,  
"in fame and state  
"but brought four sons to perfect birth,  
"shall flourish here, and shall in deed  
"triumph o'er fate."

A stone in the pavement without the chancel, and near the door of the vestry, has the record, "Here lies Sir William Petty." He was born at Romsey, in 1623, in comparatively humble circumstances, his father being a clothier. But he grew up to be a man of remarkably versatile talent, amassed a large fortune by the practice of medicine, and from him the Marquis of Lansdowne descends. Few have accomplished such a feat as he did; for, in connection with three other practitioners, he restored the suspended animation of a woman who had been hanged the usual time at Oxford.

Broadlands passed from the St. Barbés by sale

to the second Viscount Palmerston, father of the present, towards the middle of the last century. He erected the existing mansion, designed by "Capability Brown," who also laid out the grounds. It stands on the eastern side of the Test, built of fine white bricks, and presents an elegant front, adorned with a portico in the purest style of the Ionic order. All the interior arrangements afford evidence of the excellent taste of the then owner, who collected together the valuable paintings which now hang upon the walls, and some fine specimens of ancient statuary. The pictures include portraits, heads, and scenes, by Rubens, Rembrandt, Domeni-



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LORD PALMERSTON.

chino, Vandyke, Canaletti, Caracci, Jordaens, Gerard Dow, Guido, and Paul Veronese; sea pieces by Louthenbourg, Peters, and Vandervelde; landscapes by Claude Lorraine, N. Poussin, Ruysdael, Teniers, Wouvermans, and Salvator Rosa.

To artistic taste and classical acquirements, the first noble proprietor of Broadlands added great literary merit and keen sensibilities. No better proof of this can be given than the inscription written by him for his deceased wife, and placed in Romsey church—one of the most beautiful ever composed.

"TO THE MEMORY OF FRANCES, VISCOUNTESS PALMERSTON.

"Whoe'er, like me, with trembling anguish brings  
His heart's whole treasure to fair Bristol's springs;  
Whoe'er, like me, to worth, distress, and pain,  
Shall court these salutary springs in vain;  
Condemn'd, like me, to hear the faint reply,  
To mark the fading cheek, the sinking eye;  
From the chill brow to wipe the damp of death,  
And watch, in dumb despair, the short'ning breath:  
If chance should bring him to this artless line,  
Let the sad mourner know his pangs were mine.

"Ordain'd to lose the partner of my breast,  
Whose virtue warm'd me, and whose beauty blest;  
Framed every tie that binds the heart to prove,  
Her duty friendship, and her friendship love,  
But yet rememb'ring that the parting sigh  
Appoints the just to slumber—not to die;  
The starting tear I check'd—I kiss the rod,  
And not to earth resign her, but to God."

The lady thus affectionately regretted was the only daughter of Sir Francis Poole, a Cheshire baronet. She died childless, in London, in 1769. The widower married again, Mary, daughter of Benjamin Mee, Esq., of Bath, the mother of the present viscount.

Very nearly half a century ago, in 1802, Broadlands came into the possession of the British premier, by the decease of his father. Then he was a youth of eighteen, in training for achievements; and all must pronounce him now a wonderful man of seventy-five, after having served his country so long in arduous offices, arranged an endless series of foreign difficulties, written thousands of despatches, and made hundreds of speeches towards the midnight hour. Still is he well built and good-looking. Still is his gait erect and step firm. He can debate also for hours with effect, as both friends and foes will testify; and Lord Palmerston in the senate is not more worthy of admiration than Lord Palmerston as a Hampshire proprietor, taking part with his neighbours in the carrying out of measures which, if they have but little of what is dazzling to recommend them, are of incalculable public importance. He goes to his country seat at holidays during the session, and in the interval between the meetings of parliament, when Downing Street can spare him, yet not to slumber and sleep, not to hunt and shoot; but while necessarily employed with affairs of state on the banks of the Test, he personally attends to the welfare of the poorest dependants, and is at pains to proclaim it to be the duty of every landholder and master to do so likewise. "Statesmen," said the "Record" newspaper, in a laudatory notice of Lord Palmerston's exemplary conduct as a landlord, "are never acting more in accordance with the dignity of their

office, and the high responsibilities devolving on them, than when addressing kindly words to the humbler classes, and assisting, by their presence and counsel, plans tending to promote their temporal comfort and moral respectability."

There is at Romsey a Labourers' Encouragement Association, of some years' standing, which annually awards prizes for long servitude, ploughing, thatching, drilling, keeping cottages neat, the cultivation of gardens, almost every description of agricultural employment, and general good conduct in the families with which male or female servants are connected. Lord Palmerston is the president. Though not always able to attend the distribution, he was present on the last occasion, handed over the prizes to the successful candidates in the Town Hall, and made some capital remarks addressed to the audience generally and to the hard-working men and women more directly concerned. No one could have discharged the duty with more effect and grace. "I can assure you," said he, "that these opportunities of meeting familiarly with those whom one does not meet every day in the year, are most gratifying to me, and must be so to every right-minded man. The fabric of society is constructed by an infinite gradation of ranks and conditions; and those who are perhaps separated from each other, and have not often an occasion of meeting, when the opportunities do occur, should meet in order that they may reciprocally understand each other. I am sure that all classes of Englishmen, if they do understand each other, will value and love each other. I am not led away by any national vanity in that opinion; but I have that conviction with regard to the character of my country, that I am sure the oftener the different classes of society meet together, the more the whole fabric of society will be cemented, the stronger the nation will be, and the more each class will look to the other without jealousy, without suspicion, without enmity—with a conviction that there are no antagonistic interests, but that the interests of all are bound up in one general aggregate, which forms the interest of the country at large." Wise words these.

As it is a rare event for peasantry to stand face to face, and receive counsel from one who has had to deliver opinions to the Metternichs, Manteuffels, Guizots, and Thierses of Europe, we will report what he had to say to the thatchers, ploughmen, and cottagers' wives round about Romsey—the prize-men and prize-women. "I would remind you that there are functions of life and duties not precisely connected with those kinds of conduct which have distinguished you on this occasion, but which nevertheless are greatly conducive to your well-being, and to the respect which you would wish to receive from others. I would particularly impress upon you the great importance of attending to the manner in which you rear your children. Impressions made in early life we all know are lasting; and there are no impressions that go deeper into the mind of a child than those which he receives from his parents in his tender years. Bend the twig as you like, and so the tree will grow. Probably those who are employed out of doors all day long have fewer opportunities than others of

attending to the instruction of their children. But you all of you have moments which you can devote to that purpose; and you should not omit any opportunity which family intercourse affords you to impress strongly upon your children the distinction between right and wrong. You may be sure that if you duly attend to the moral and religious instruction of the family that surrounds you, you will find them grow up to be an honour to themselves, and a comfort to you to the latest days of your life."

Farmers had a hint or two given them which would have made their grandsires scratch their heads and look confounded. Such ideas still need to be circulated. "Agriculture has undergone a great change. It used to be a practice. It is now raised to the condition of a science, and no man can be a successful agriculturist who does not raise his mind beyond the mere traditions of those who went before him, and who does not study the principles on which success in agriculture mainly depends. A farmer ought now to know something, and perhaps not a little, of chemistry. He ought to know what are the ingredients of the soil which different crops take out for their nourishment. He ought to know how, by various manures or by various processes, to restore to the soil those ingredients essential to the growth of plants which former crops have taken out. He ought also, to a certain extent, to know the fundamental principles of political economy, and to be aware that he does not prosper by grinding down those who labour on his farm; that it is no real saving to give inadequate wages to those who work for him; and that he gains nothing by avoiding to employ labour in the winter months. When the employers of labour bestow proper attention upon their labourers, they engender a feeling of reciprocal regard; and it is in human nature that a man will work better for an employer he loves, and who treats him well, than for a man who is niggardly and churlish, who just pays him as much as will keep body and soul together, and neglects him in other respects."

Landlords received a lesson. In allusion to improved cottages at Broadlands, he remarked:—"I have heard it said that these buildings are altogether too expensive, that they do not pay, and that other people could not afford to erect them. Now, I hold that observation to be founded on a fundamental error. When I build a cottage for a labourer on a farm, I do not expect it to pay in money. When I build a good farm-house for a tenant, I do not expect rent for that house separate from the farm. Well, the cottage for the labourer ought to be looked upon as a part of the appurtenances of a farm, just as much as the buildings for cattle, or any of those other erections essential to the cultivation of the land. How can the land be well cultivated if the labourers are not well housed?" Passing on to the prime consideration, the moral bearing of good house accommodation, a matter in which the labourer can do little to help himself, as it requires capital, he observed:—"The effect of improving these dwellings is almost marvellous. You know that the comfort of a man's house depends upon the tidiness of his wife, and the mode in which she tries to make him comfortable. But there is a

temper of the human mind which is denominated recklessness. When a thing seems impossible, it is given up in despair. When a cottage is in such a state that it is impossible for the wife to keep it clean, she becomes a slattern, everything goes to ruin, the man is disgusted, and flies to the beer-shop. If, on the contrary, the wife feels that she can, by a little exertion, make the cottage decent and respectable, she does so, and then the man enjoys the comfort and happiness of his home, stays away from the beer-shop, and the sum of money he would spend in liquor goes to the benefit of his wife and children."

Dexterous as Lord Palmerston is in solving a political difficulty, shine as he does in parliament, the enunciation of such sentiments as these, to which we rejoice to give currency, forms a better foundation for the remark, "We are all proud of him." The men are few and far between who have the capacity and the will to address suitably senators and peasants; who can expound the law of nations to one audience and the principles of successful agriculture to another; preside over the interests of a great empire and be busy with the economy of cottage homes. Romsey may be congratulated upon having Lord Palmerston for a neighbour.

#### THE SICILIAN VESPER.

AMONG its many changes, the kingdom of Naples passed into the hands of the emperors of Germany towards the end of the twelfth century. On the accession of Conrad IV, in the year 1251, he marched with an army to Naples, where at first he was received with joy. But the great struggle between the Guelph, or Pope's party, and the Ghibelline, or Emperor's, then raging in all its fury, Conrad and his army soon found full occupation in quieting one of its many outbreaks; and this had not been long accomplished, when Conrad was poisoned by his ambitious half-brother, Manfred. Conrad bequeathed his dominions to his only child, a boy three years old, named Conradin, who, too young to fight for his own, had therefore at present but his German States.

Now, it did not suit the Pope at all to let this event pass, and Manfred was excommunicated by Alexander IV. His successor, a Frenchman, Urban IV, was no better friend to Manfred, but the Guelph spirit prevented both from helping Conradin, the lawful heir, and the head of the Ghibelline faction. Urban IV soon laid a plan for establishing Guelph influence in the south of Italy. He had a countryman, bold, grasping, and unscrupulous, whom he thought it as well to conciliate—Charles of Anjou, brother of the king of France. As little right had he to offer, as Charles to receive, the kingdom of Naples, yet to him it was proffered by the Pope, on condition that the certain war with Manfred, which would follow, should be carried on at his own cost. Charles accepted the condition, and, gathering his army, came to Rome, where events were somewhat forestalled. Charles and his wife were crowned King and Queen of Naples, by Clement IV, in 1267; and for the yet unconquered kingdom, a yearly rent

of forty thousand marks was promised to the Holy See.

The very approach of the French army inspired Manfred's forces with almost panic terror; yet Charles was met near the city of Benevento, and a battle was fought. Manfred himself fought desperately, and, finding his army disorganized, flung himself into the midst of the French cavalry, by whom he was killed without being known. For three days his body was sought among the slain. Brought at length to Charles, in savage exultation he commanded that the few nobles who had remained faithful to Manfred should be brought to tell whether the corpse were indeed that of their leader. Of this their grief at the sight of it left no doubt. Charles desired that Manfred, being excommunicated, should be left unburied; but, in admiration of his excessive bravery, every soldier in the French army brought a stone to raise a pile over his remains. They were not suffered to rest; by order of Clement VII they were cast out into the open country.

By the manner in which Charles began his reign, it appears that he had desired power but to have greater means of doing evil. Manfred's wife and children were thrown into a miserable prison, where, one after another, they soon died. The terrible tidings of the crime that deprived her at once of father, mother, brothers, sisters, and heritage were carried to the sole survivor, Constance, married to the King of Arragon. For long years she brooded how she might wreak a terrible revenge; while Charles, in the fulness of his triumph, that the memory of his deeds might be perpetuated, added to the Royal Arms of Naples a label inscribed with a motto, indicating the destruction of Manfred's race, which he believed he had extirpated root and branch, like a noxious plant.

The horrors of Charles's rule were but begun. Over the whole of the kingdom ran the French army, and wherever they went, their track was marked by fire and blood. The nobility were plundered, their estates laid waste, their castles burnt. Those who had sided with Charles, and those who had supported Manfred, all were ruined indiscriminately. The Neapolitan people writhed in agony.

Meanwhile, in Germany, Conradin, the last of his race, was growing up. Educated by his mother, it was her desire to render him worthy of the hopes fixed upon him. He was now sixteen. The conquered people heard how clever and how brave he was, and sent earnest entreaties that he would come and reclaim his heritage. "The only son of his mother, and she a widow," she thought of his youth and inexperience, and in fear and sorrow refused her consent to the enterprise. But she was over-ruled. Conradin's chosen friend and companion, Frederic, Duke of Austria, was eager for the war, and he was supported by the flower of Germany. There was romance enough in the boy emperor's expedition to attract the young, and justice enough to satisfy the old. The young came for the love of Conradin, and knew he would succeed; the old came for the love of the empire, and remembered with a sigh the traditions of the first of the race, the mighty Frederic Barbarossa; wishing,

with the sorrowing mother, that the last, Conradin, were but older. And so they left Germany to try their fortunes in the sunny south.

As the train went on, it increased. Over the plains of Lombardy the tidings flew that the young emperor was coming to win back his own, and one and all the Ghibellines took up their arms. The fierce dark Saracens, old allies of Manfred's, came to help the fair-haired Northerners. Conrad, Prince of Antioch, hurried home from the East to help his kinsman, and Charles of Anjou heard in Naples of this great revolt. Conradin reached Verona, where he passed the winter. The Pope excommunicated him, but the thunders were unheard. The Prince of Antioch had been stirring up Sicily, and in the spring Conradin continued his march. As he neared Rome, the Pope felt no confidence even in his own weapons, and fled. The populace received the emperor with shouts and pealing bells, and the chief magistrate brought men and money. So all seemed to prosper, and Conradin was only impatient for the battle which would restore him his rights. He did not wait long now. Charles of Anjou, with an army far smaller, but far more disciplined than his own, met him as he entered his kingdom; and then, as one frost will destroy the whole promise of the spring's blossom, all the hope of Germany was blighted in one bloody day on the plain of Aquila. Conradin's army was totally defeated, and he himself, with the Duke of Austria and a few others of the nobility, escaped to Sicily. Here they were betrayed into Charles's hands, and by his orders were brought to Naples.

The measure of Charles's iniquity was not yet full. His next act was to assemble judges from all parts of Naples to decide what punishment Conradin merited, for having taken up arms against the Pope, despoiled the churches at Rome, and usurped the crown of Naples. Even of these, only one had the hardihood to declare for his death. But this single voice was sufficient, and in eager haste Charles ordered the erection of an enormous scaffold in the market-place of Naples.

The people came in crowds to see whether it were really true that the poor boy was to die. All along the sea-shore, in the streets, in the market-place they gathered; and presently their doubts were satisfied most woefully and fully. There were brought forth from prison, and led to the great scaffold, the principal of the German captains and nobles who had survived the battle of Aquila—Frederic, Duke of Austria, and Conradin, by inheritance emperor of Germany and king of Naples.

In the hushed silence, he who at the mock trial had pronounced the sentence of death, proclaimed it aloud. There was the usurper to hear and see, and to make sure the deed was done; but even his presence could not restrain the fury of one of his own knights, Robert of Flanders, who rushed at the judge, and stabbed him dead.

We are told that when Conradin and Frederic received the news of their sentence, they were playing chess together. Brought on the scaffold, like a boy as he was, Conradin cried bitterly, and called his mother's name, and said how she would grieve. Like an emperor, with his own hands he took off

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his royal robe, that it might not be defiled by impure hands. Like a Christian, covering his face, he prayed. He threw his glove among the people, entreating that it might be taken to his cousin Constance of Arragon. And then the deed was done; first Conradin's head fell, then Frederic's, then, one after another by their rank, the heads of the nobles and captains.

This first judicial murder of a crowned monarch before his own people, and he a weeping defenceless orphan boy,\* struck with horror not only the Neapolitans, but all who throughout Europe learned the news of so unheard-of an outrage; and the memory of all the innocent blood shed that day was to haunt Charles of Anjou himself, until he could no longer bear the torments of his conscience.

A horseman sped with Conradin's glove to Constance. It did but deepen her desire for revenge. All she now wanted was an instrument to carry out her wishes; which instrument was soon found.

Off the coast of Naples lies the little isle of Procida. It was at this time owned by a nobleman, John, called after his estate, di Procida. He was a man of great note. Born to rank and riches, his love of study led him to be a physician, and from his character and position both Conrad and Manfred had taken him into their counsels. When Charles usurped the kingdom, he also endeavoured to win to his party one possessing such influence; but very soon, on a pretence of treason, John di Procida was stripped of his estates. The French inflicted on him yet more cruel private wrongs, and, to crown all, he saw the last of his own royal line butchered in cold blood at Naples. Thoroughly exasperated against Charles and all belonging to him, he might at once have broken out in some equally sudden and useless effort at vengeance; but, cool and self-contained, for his accumulated wrongs John di Procida planned a revenge as deliberate as it was deadly. He quietly withdrew from Naples, and went to Arragon, where Constance received him with great joy, and King Pedro loaded him with more titles and estates than he had lost. His first object was to persuade Pedro (not a difficult matter) that, in right of his wife, Naples belonged to himself. This done, and Pedro's help secured thereby, he unfolded his design for avenging at once his private wrongs and the wrongs of his royal masters. It was the murder of every Frenchman in Sicily, followed by the proclamation of Pedro as king. So Constance found what she had sought.

Charles of Anjou had lost one firm friend in the Pope, the present wearer of the tiara, Nicholas III, being extremely disgusted with his pride and insolence; which change of politics in successive popes, we may observe in passing, affords a singular commentary on the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church. Nothing daunted, and believing Naples and Sicily to be in his quiet possession, Charles turned his thoughts eastwards, and resolved to push his fortunes in that quarter. He collected an enormous force to make war upon the Greek emperor, Michael Paleologus, which war was to

begin with the siege of Constantinople. The emperor, hearing of these preparations, called to his aid the learned and wise counsellor of the former kings of Naples, the sworn foe of the usurper and his race, John di Procida. The invitation to a conference at Constantinople was accepted, but neither to Constantinople or Sicily did the wary schemer move at once.

Spies were sent from Arragon into every part of Sicily, to try the fidelity of the people to their old masters. They brought back but one report: the Sicilians hate the French. John di Procida disappeared from the court of Arragon. Shortly after was seen in Sicily a Franciscan monk, whose energy and activity were almost a miracle. He appeared bent on exploring every corner of the island. Heat and cold he disregarded alike; unhalting, he pressed up the steepest mountain side; unwearied, he rested not in the greenest shade; unflagging, he stayed not in the heat of the most fervid plain. The peasant met him where never in his life had he seen any one before; in the busiest street of Palermo the dark figure went on. And he accomplished his purpose. Hardly a foot of Sicily did he leave untrodden. His wants were few, yet he entered almost every house; as few were his words, yet he spoke to almost every Sicilian. As if through magic, his course might be tracked by the bitter hatred of the French becoming tenfold more bitter, and those who had spoken with him bore the burden of a dreadful secret.

Charles heard of the wonderful Franciscan, and, suspecting mischief, sent his spies on his path. By his coolness and self-command, he baffled every one of them, and slipped through their hands. All they could discover was that, as the monk came, so he went, and he was no longer seen in Sicily.

Shortly afterwards, the Emperor Michael received a very welcome visitor, John di Procida. The result of their conferences was the full persuasion of the emperor that he could not better hinder Charles's designs against himself, than by aiding King Pedro and John in their designs against Charles. When he left Constantinople, John di Procida took with him one of the emperor's chief secretaries, and plenty of money. The secretary he put on shore at Sicily, to confer with the principal conspirators, while he himself waited in the ship. Satisfactory letters were sent him, and he took his course to the mainland.

To the consternation of Charles, the untiring Franciscan once more appeared, gradually pursuing a northward course. At Suriano, near Rome, he had an interview with the Pope. He then turned his face towards Spain. It was now the beginning of the year 1280. The Franciscan passed the Spanish border, and as he did so, he cast off his gown and beads. Those who have followed the dark story of John di Procida will know that it was unwearied revenge—let us hope, for the credit of human nature, tempered with patriotic feeling—which carried him up the rugged mountains and over the burning plains. Arrived in Arragon, he showed Pedro the letters from the conspirators in Sicily, the Emperor, and the Pope; all promising help, and abounding in good-will.

\* With Conradin ended the rule of the House of Swabia in the empire of Germany, and that of Hapsburg begun when Rodolph ascended the imperial throne in 1273.

The king of Arragon at once employed the Greek gold in fitting out a great fleet, under pretence of invading Africa; in reality, to make good his ground in Sicily. His zeal was greatly damped by the change of affairs at Rome. For Nicholas III died, and was succeeded by Martin IV, who, favourable to Charles, added to his dignities that of a senator of Rome.

Nothing moved John di Procida. Again he went to Sicily, again to Constantinople. The conspirators were firm, the secret was kept, the Emperor gave more money—thirty thousand ounces of gold. His return to Arragon with such good news and abundant help, inspired Pedro to renew his preparations. So great were these, that the Pope and the king of France sent to ask the very natural question, "Against what Saracens is the fleet to be used?" Receiving no reply, they sent to warn Charles. As though blindly rushing to his own destruction, he refused to listen, and gave no thought to anything but the preparation of his own fleet for Constantinople. The king of Arragon intended to set sail in the following summer, and John di Procida finding that his work in Spain was done, went finally to Palermo in the spring of 1282, waiting till the French themselves should give occasion for the execution of his plot.

The 30th of March, Easter Monday, arrived. The leading conspirators came to dine with John di Procida, in Palermo. A ghastly banquet it was. In the evening their common superstition united French and Sicilians in a procession to the Church of Monreale, three miles off. They came out into the fields. Everywhere the bells were ringing for Vespers. Just then, a bridal train passed. Pretending to look for arms, a Frenchman, named Droquet, insulted the bride. A Sicilian stabbed him on the spot, and in one moment the train which had been laid for two years blazed up. With the pealing bells mingled the cry, "Death to the French! Death to the French!" From the fields of Monreale it was sent into the streets of Palermo, from Palermo away over the whole island. Of the horrors by which it was answered, we can hardly speak. From the old man to the new-born babe, all who had any taint of French blood perished. Fathers spared not their daughters' husbands and children, and the slaughter went on until eight thousand persons lay dead. One man was spared with his family; one small town refused to join in the bloody work. Wisdom and virtue have in this world seldom been so signally rewarded as in the case of Guillaume di Pourcelet, a gentleman of Provence, the only Frenchman who was spared, because he was justly beloved by all around him. There are few better lessons of humanity than that which may be learned from the inscription placed on the castle walls at Sperlinga—

"IN THAT WHICH PLEASED THE SICILIANS, THE PEOPLE OF SPERLINGA FOUND NOT THEIR PLEASURE."

Such were "The Sicilian Vespers;" so were avenged the evil deeds of the French; so had Constance of Arragon and John di Procida their desire. Of John di Procida we can tell no more. For the murder of Conradin there came upon Charles of Anjou yet more awful retribution.

King Pedro received the homage of the Sicilians, and was crowned at Palermo. Charles hurried away. His fleet was destroyed in a sea fight. He now had the folly to summon Pedro to try the matter in single combat, which summons was disregarded. Philip III, his nephew, was king of France, and Charles went in person to entreat his aid, leaving his son "Charles the Lame" to govern Naples in his absence. The king of France gave all the help in his power. Strict orders had been given to Charles the Lame to do nothing till the help arrived from France; but his father came back to hear that these orders had been disobeyed, and that, in consequence, his son was a prisoner at Messina. Not only did Charles of Anjou hear this, but he was told also that, by his son's death, the Sicilians intended to revenge the murder of Conradin. It was more than he could bear—misfortunes without, the horrors of a guilty conscience within. He took a halter, and strangled himself. Making this evil world more evil, shedding innocent blood, grasping at the possessions of others, a cruel oppressor, hated wherever his name was heard, goaded by remorse for his crimes to commit the last and greatest of all, and send himself into eternity—such was Charles of Anjou. In the "History of the Thirteenth Century" we read also of another: a king who wore his earthly crown as the preparation for a crown of glory; seeking not his own; meek, lowly, and just; "ruling in the fear of the Lord;" loved well-nigh to adoration—such was Louis IX of France—"Saint Louis."

And Louis IX and Charles of Anjou were brothers! Brought up at the same mother's knee, one living to serve God, the other to serve the devil, to be separated eternally, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Why it was so, is only known to Him unto "whom all hearts be open, and from whom no secrets are hid." He has given to us the solemn lesson of their lives; the mystery of them we leave to him.\*

#### SUGAR-MAKING IN MADEIRA.

Most people know that the far-famed wine of Madeira has become a rarity. This is owing to the disease which some years since attacked the grape-vine in all parts of the world. Nowhere did it produce more calamitous results than in the beautiful island of Madeira. But it is said that the peasantry of Madeira are actually better off now, owing to the cultivation of the sugar-cane, than they were in the more prosperous days of the wine trade. It is a curious instance of returning into old paths; for originally the sugar-cane was the staple commodity of the island, soon after its discovery by the Portuguese. The arms of Funchal are still five sugar-loaves, clearly indicating the original wealth of this island. One of the first things which strikes the eye of the stranger, on landing in Madeira, is the pale sickly green of the sugar-cane, alternating with the brown volcanic character of the soil. Probably the appearance of this plant will be unknown

\* For an outline of the history of Naples and Sicily, see the "Leisure Hour," Nos. 459 and 444.

to the European traveller landing in Madeira; for, though the sugar-cane was once cultivated in Sicily, and may now be seen in the neighbourhood of Malaga, it is not until we approach the tropics that we find it cultivated in any considerable quantity, or with remunerative returns.

The cane is a grass or reed, classed as *Saccharum officinarum*. Its leaves are lanceolate, rough to the touch, and, seen under the microscope, covered with siliceous particles resembling fragments of glass. In the spring it puts forth an elegant, graceful-looking flower like a feather, and of a reddish colour. It is planted in trenches in the spring or autumn. The cuttings root easily, from the joints of which the reed is formed, and in eight or ten months rise to the height of six to ten feet, and are then fit for cutting for the mill. The cane is the valuable part of the plant, being filled with saccharine matter, and is very sweet to the taste. The leaves are comparatively useless, though they are used as fodder for the horses in Madeira.

The sugar-harvest commences in March, and goes on with activity through March and April. The canes, cut and sorted in bundles, are carried on wooden sledges drawn by oxen to the mills. Many of the peasantry have their little crops of sugar-cane in the ground round their cottages, and they carry the produce of these in to the proprietor of the mill, who extracts the juice from the cane, and pays the cultivator according to the weight of the juice. In a well-ordered mill, the refuse, or crushed cane, is used as fuel for the steam-engine. The process of extracting the juice from the cane, and consolidating it into sugar, is a simple one. The cane is first pressed between two cylinders, and crushed into threads; this is the refuse-matter. The juice, valuable either for spirit or for sugar, is conveyed away by a pipe into a tank, where its density is measured by a man with an instrument for that purpose. He stands by the tank with the owner of the bundles of sugar-cane near him, who sees that a proper measure of the juice is allowed him, and the density of the liquid carefully measured. This man holds in his hand a slip of paper, on which is written the name of the owner of the sugar-canes, and that of the proprietor of the land on which the canes are grown. According to the Portuguese law, half the liquid is the property of the owner of the land; half goes to the tenant.

The juice is received, as we said, into tanks; the bottom of these are lined with warm pipes. This is to promote fermentation. In this state it has the appearance of thick green pea-soup, with abundance of froth bubbling on the surface. If the juice does not contain a sufficient quantity of saccharine matter to make it worth while to make it into sugar, it is passed away into another part of the building, where it is distilled, and becomes the spirit *aguardente*, which is really rum, only colourless, and looks like gin. The distilling process is carried on in the ordinary distilling way in a separate building, the juice being first received into casks, when it is allowed to ferment. We were grieved to learn that this actually is the most lucrative part of the business, and supplies every

little *venda*, or public-house, in Madeira with the fiery spirit, which is not inaptly called *aguardente*, or burning water.

But to return to sugar-making. The juice intended for sugar is passed from the tank in which we saw it just received, into a second tank, heated also at the bottom; a little lime is mixed with it, in order to purify it; it is allowed to ferment here for three hours; and this is the first process towards clarifying the juice, which is extremely dirty. The dirt floats at the top of the tank, whence it is removed. From this tank the juice is conveyed to a third tank, with a wooden erection not very unlike the arms of a windmill in it. These are moved rapidly round by steam power, and help, in this second process, to disintegrate the dirt from the saccharine matter. The juice is passed from these tanks into tubs, in the centre of which a sieve is placed filled with charcoal made from bone. This is a second clarifying process. The liquid trickles through the charcoal, and passes out into pans, in which are hollow cylinders filled with steam, over which the liquid flows. This, we were told, is a French invention, the purpose of which is to aid evaporation of the water, and to consolidate the sweet matter, which by this time has become thick, and of a dull brown colour. This is what is technically called molasses, and is composed of treacle and sugar. Men are employed to break this up—for it is by this time a thick mass of stuff congealed together—and to take it in baskets to undergo the last process, by which the treacle in the molasses is separated from the sugar, and the sugar becomes the article of commerce fit for exportation; not white lump sugar, but brown and crystallized, according to the quality of the molasses, into a finer or coarser grained sugar. The machine used for this last process is exceedingly ingenious. The molasses is cast into a tub, in the centre of which is a conical ball, not unlike a sugar-loaf in shape, and the sides of this tub are lined with perforated metal. This tub is inclosed in a larger one. It is then whirled round with very great rapidity. The sugar, unable to pass through the perforated metal, adheres to the side of the inner tub; the treacle passes as liquid through the metal. The sugar is then scraped off the sides of this machine, and put in bags for exportation. The treacle flows away into another tank.

Such, then, reader, is the mystery of sugar-making, as we saw it one fine bright morning in the lovely island of Madeira. There was nothing to disturb the pleasure of our visit, for it was no slave-grown sugar that we saw being made, but the work of honest labour. One thing alone we could have wished absent, and that was the number of empty barrels waiting to be filled with the spirit *aguardente*. But there is a shadow or a dark side to everything in life, and we suppose the shadow in this case of sugar-making was that. The sugar that sweetens the innocent cup which cheers but does not inebriate, is capable of being turned into a spirit, which may afford a momentary gratification, but which, if indulged in to excess, will bring the dram-drinker to ruin, and cover his family with misery.

## VARIETIES.

**SAGACITY OF THE DOG.**—A correspondent (G. H.) sends the following from Bradford:—"Some years ago, when residing in the city of York, I owned a dog, a cross between the pointer and springer. I got him from a friend when about seven or eight weeks old, and I broke and trained him with great care. On one occasion my wife, who had several little jobs to do on the Saturday night, preparatory to the sabbath, had got the youngest child into the cradle and was busily employed with her work, when Pero (that was the dog's name) set up an unusually loud barking, which waked baby, and made her very cross and difficult to get to sleep again. I went into the yard, talked mildly to him, told him he had done very wrong to bark and wake Elizabeth, and must not do so again. That he knew every word I said to him I never for one moment thought of doubting: I had seen too many instances of his sagacity to do that; his every action showed his appreciation of what I said to him, indicating at the same time his wish to be excused for his fault, promising, as faithfully as dog could promise, that if I would only let him off this time he would not transgress again. I told him I should not flog him, but he must not do so again; he understood it all, and obeyed orders to the letter. Now, the cause of Pero's barking was this. My next-door neighbour had a well-stored larder that night, which some thieves were wishful to possess themselves of, to do which they must scale the yard wall, and get on to the ridge that separated me and my neighbour. On their approach, Pero sounded the note of alarm and they speedily retreated. Nothing daunted by the first failure, they returned some time during the night, made their way over the shed where the dog was chained, effected their purpose, carried off everything the pantry contained, returning by the same way, and got clear off with their booty, without a single note from my hitherto faithful guardian of the night. Surely this is a striking instance of the sagacity of the dog. But for the orders he had received, no thief could ever have got to that neighbour's pantry. I could enumerate many more instances of his sagacity, amounting almost to the reasoning faculty; but the above may suffice to show that a dog constantly in one person's possession, and carefully trained, does often show a truly wonderful amount of sagacity."

**MORMONISM IN ITS BUD.**—In 1827, the Mormon "Bible" was discovered, and the first Mormonite congregation, of thirty members, first enjoyed the ministrations of the impostor Joseph Smith, at Fayette, on the 1st of June, 1830. As the inhabitants of Fayette knew too much of this swindling money-digger to tolerate with patience the zeal of his devotions, they threw out hints by no means flattering to him, which induced the prophet suddenly to obtain a "revelation" that the faithful few should transport themselves to Kirtland, in Ohio, where they continued to reside till 1838. A bank which the Seer had set up proving insolvent, he had to decamp during the night. The flock followed him to Missouri; but, not meeting with the expected encouragement there, they betook themselves to Illinois, where the city of Nauvoo was founded.—*History of Mormonism.*

**PORSON'S LAST DAYS.**—In 1806, Porson was appointed Librarian to the London Institution, which was then first established. The emoluments of his office were £200 a year, together with the use of a suite of rooms. We fear he did not discharge the duties of his office with much care; indeed, the irregularity of his habits had now become so great as to be inconsistent with the proper fulfilment of any duties that demanded punctual and methodical attention. It is painful to dwell on the concluding period of his life. On Monday, September 19, 1808, as he was walking down the Strand, about two o'clock in the afternoon, on arriving at the corner of Northumberland Street, he fell senseless in an apoplectic

fit. None of the people who quickly surrounded him knew who he was. He was accordingly conveyed to the workhouse in Castle Street, St. Martin's Lane. Medical aid was procured, and he was partially restored to consciousness; but he was unable to speak, and was still unknown. A notice was inserted in the "British Press" of the following day, describing him. This led to his identification, and he was conveyed home. On the following Thursday he went out again to Cole's Coffeehouse, St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill, where he was seized with such alarming symptoms, that the hand of death was visibly upon him. He stared at those who stood around him with vacant and ghastly countenance. He was conveyed home again, and died at midnight, on Sunday, September 25, 1808.—*London Review.*

**LETTER OF OLIVER CROMWELL TO HIS DAUGHTER DOROTHY.**—Milford Haven, aboard the John, 13 August, 1649.—I desire you both to make it above all things your business to seek the Lord: to be frequently calling upon him, that he would manifest himself to you in his Son; and be listening what return he makes to you, for he will be speaking in your ear and in your heart, if you attend thereunto. I desire you to provoke your husband likewise thereunto. As for the pleasures of this life, and outward business, let that be upon the by. Be above all things, by faith in Christ, and then you shall have the true use and comfort of them—and not otherwise. I have much satisfaction in hope your spirit is in this way set; and I desire you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that I may hear thereof.—*Carlyle's "Cromwell."*

**KELP-GATHERING ON THE WESTERN COAST OF SCOTLAND.**—The scene is in one of the little bays immediately in front of Glencreggan, looking across to Islay, and over the Atlantic in the direction of America. The cliffs rise on our left, sweep round to an acute angle in Glenacardoch Point, and then recede towards Barr. Below the cliffs is a strip of greenest grass, strewn with the richly flowered bolders; then the buff line of sand and shingle; then a dark and confused mass of half-sunken rocks, thickly bestrewn with sea wrack. It is low water, and they lift up their heads from the waves like sea-giantesses, their hair hanging over their heads, wet and dank with salt water. These long tresses, rippling and glistening as the waves, are being plucked from the rocks by veritable bare-legged women, dressed in their oldest clothes, tucked up to the knees; who, when they have gathered a lapful, carry it to the shore, or lay it in heaps upon the rocks, from whence it will be transferred to the cart. The kelp-cart is made to perform many journeys backwards and forwards from the half-sunken rocks to the shore; and the horse plunges through the breakers and up the loose shingle, scattering the bright wave-drops from him at every plunge, while his driver freely uses the whip and screams at him in Gaelic horse talk. Two other men attend to the fires, turning over the heaps of smouldering kelp, and keeping them in a blaze within their circles of stones, or in shallow pits, while the columns of smoke go up like beacon-fires, and are answered by hundreds of others along the coast, until one might imagine that the Highlands were up in arms once more, and the signal for the gathering of the clans had been given.—*Cuthbert Bole's "Glencreggan."*

IN London, died recently, Miss Villette, aged eighty-two. This lady is believed to have been the last survivor of the actors in the Gordon riots in 1780, being then only one year old. Miss Villette was the daughter of the Ordinary of Newgate, and when the prison was attacked by the "No Popery" mob, she was held up as a flag of truce to the rioters.

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